

REMARKS

Claims 1-9 and 14-17 are pending in the application. It is noted with appreciation that the Examiner has claims 16 and 17 are allowable and that claims 3 and 5-9 contain allowable subject matter.

In view of the above, Applicants have canceled claims 1-9, 14 and 15 herein and added new independent claims 18 and 19. Claim 18 substantially corresponds to the allowable subject matter of claims 4 + 6 and claim 19 substantially corresponds to the allowable subject matter of claims 4 + 8.¹ It is believed that claim 19 patentably distinguishes over the prior art as the prior art fails to teach or suggest the limitations recited in claim 19.

In view of the above amendments, it is respectfully requested that this application be passed to issuance at the earliest possible convenience. If any points remain in issue which the Examiner feels may be best resolved through a personal or telephone interview, the Examiner is kindly requested to contact the undersigned at the telephone number listed below.

¹ It is noted that claim 8 is dependent on claim 5 which is dependent on claim 4. However, this was an error as claim 8 is directed to the embodiment of Figs. 5 and 6 (see p.9, last paragraph, to p. 11, 1st paragraph), whereas claim 5 is directed to the embodiment of Fig. 1 (described on page 4.). Hence, the features of claim 8 have no relation to the features of claim 5.

AMENDMENT UNDER 37 C.F.R. § 1.111
Application No.: 10/517,657

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The USPTO is directed and authorized to charge all required fees, except for the Issue Fee and the Publication Fee, to Deposit Account No. 19-4880. Please also credit any overpayments to said Deposit Account.

Respectfully submitted,

/Brian W. Hannon/

SUGHRUE MION, PLLC
Telephone: (202) 293-7060
Facsimile: (202) 293-7860

WASHINGTON OFFICE

23373

CUSTOMER NUMBER

Brian W. Hannon
Registration No. 32,778

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